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ABSTRACT

Policy Studies in Education (a department of the Educational Research Council of America) performed a third-party evaluation of the Career Education in the Arts program for gifted and talented secondary school students. The study focused primarily on a pretest and posttest of twenty-five students' career awareness and attitudes. Eighteen students were female and seven were male. The evaluators also visited the program site twice to discuss objectives and plans, review and revise the questionnaires, and to talk with students. Findings indicated that in both the pretest and posttest, students showed fairly favorable attitudes toward themselves, the arts, and the world of work in the arts. Students showed many positive changes in cognitive items which dealt with knowledge about work in the arts and career decision making. Through site visits and talking with students, it was determined that students' attitudes toward the program were very positive. Through the questionnaire, it was found that slightly over half of the students felt that students who participate in the program could expect to gain enough knowledge to make a final decision about pursuing a career in the arts. The two most pressing needs of the project are (1) rethinking parental involvement in the project, and (2) continuing to develop, revise, and refine the career education component of the program. (LRA)

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EVALUATING CAREER EDUCATION IN THE ARTS

THE CENTER FOR CAREER EDUCATION IN THE ARTS

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

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Sponsored by:

Rhode Island State Council on the Arts
Providence, Rhode Island

Submitted by:

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POLICY STUDIES IN EDUCATION

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A DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL OF AMERICA

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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INTRODUCTION

In September, 1976, the Center for Career Education in the Arts (Providence, Rhode Island) contracted with Policy Studies in Education (PSE) to serve as the third-party evaluator of this career education program for gifted and talented secondary school students during 1976-77. PSE had previously served as the third-party evaluator of this same program during the 1975-76 project year. For the past two years, the Center has been funded and sponsored by the Office of Career Education of the United States Office of Education and the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts.

The Center's program is designed to give gifted and talented high school students intensive arts skills training in a chosen area of concentration (creative writing, dance, music, theater, and visual arts) as well as to provide these students with career education instruction particularly in: (1) career decision-making in the arts; (2) self-awareness and self-knowledge related to a future in the arts; and (3) knowledge about careers in the arts. A brief overview of the Center's program, including an explanation of parental participation in Center-sponsored activities, is presented in the next section of this report.

PSE's evaluation work for 1976-77 focused primarily on student pretesting in October and posttesting in May. As part of this summative evaluation, PSE staff visited the Center in September, 1976, in order to meet with the Project staff, discuss objectives and plans for the year, and review and revise the student questionnaire. The parent questionnaire was also discussed and revised at this time. In addition to the Project staff's suggestions for

revision of both questionnaires, PSE was able to draw on 1975-76 data in order to determine which questions worked well and provided valuable and significant information.

PSE remained in written and telephone contact with Project staff throughout the project year; PSE staff was also able to attend the Project Director's presentation on the Center at the Commissioner's National Conference on Career Education in Houston, Texas, in November, 1976.

In order to obtain firsthand impressions of the Center's program and to get an opportunity to talk with involved students, PSE made a second site visit to the Center in February, 1977. At that time, PSE attended a Center Open House (at which many participating students performed for a variety of guests, including State Department of Education officials and parents, and discussed their work at the Center) and observed one of the weekly career education programs. PSE's conclusions about this site visit also provided data for this report.

It should be noted that PSE's evaluation efforts for students are intended to deal only with their career awareness and attitudes. The Center's staff of working artists undoubtedly deserve much credit for students' increased art skills and individual accomplishments in the arts, but we have not attempted to measure these objectively. Our informal impressions of many students' artistic accomplishments are presented in the final section of this report.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

This overview is included to enable the reader to understand more completely the Center for Career Education in the Arts--its program, its staff, and its student participants--which produced the student evaluation results which are the focus of this final evaluation report and are fully detailed in the next section.

The Center for Career Education in the Arts

During 1976-77, the Center has been housed in the Windmill Street School in Providence, Rhode Island. The Center has exclusive use of a gymnasium (for theater work), an auditorium with a stage (for dance work), and several regular classrooms (for creative writing, music, and visual arts). From this location, the Center serves the northern and middle sections of Rhode Island, including eleven school districts and five private schools. The program is in its second year of operation, having undergone several significant and positive changes as a result of its first-year experiences.

Program Goals

According to A Curriculum for Career Education in the Arts which has been produced by the Center, the overall program has four major goals:

- each student will increase his/her self-awareness and understanding of his/her own values, interests, talents, and motivations related to work in the arts;
- each student will increase his/her knowledge about work in the arts with focus upon required skills, concepts, work habits, discipline, problem solving, the creative process, artists, careers, and survival;

- each student will increase his/her ability to engage in the career decision-making process based upon his/her self-understanding and his/her knowledge about the world of work in the arts; and

- each parent will increase his/her understanding of his/her son's/daughter's artistic talents and motivations as well as of careers in the arts and will support his/her child in career decision making.

These four goals are specifically tied to the career education component of the Center's program. In addition, the Center also strives to increase students' actual skills in the five identified art areas of creative writing, dance, music, theater, and visual arts by providing a carefully designed and, in some cases, individualized instructional program.

Staff and Student Participants

The Center's staff is composed of a Project Director and a variety of working artists who instruct students in the various areas of concentration; an average of six working artists are teaching each day at the Center. In addition, many artists of local, state, and national reputations who live in Rhode Island serve as consultants to the program and as guest speakers for the students. A Volunteer in Action provides secretarial services.

This year the Center served approximately 60 Rhode Island students who were primarily juniors and seniors in high school. The students, who are chosen by audition, are assigned to one of the five art disciplines offered at the Center and are also involved in some interdisciplinary work as well as in the career education component of the program. (Parents of the participating students are also involved in Center activities through open houses, individual consultations, and specially designed informational workshops.)

Major Program Activities

Students attend daily three-hour workshops from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on each school day. All students receive credit for their work at the Center and are evaluated quarterly by the staff. The program is tuition free for all students.

As has been mentioned earlier, the three major program strands are: (1) intensive art skills training; (2) interdisciplinary art work (one day per week in which students take instruction in a second discipline which is either of interest to them or important for them to know about in order to improve their understanding of their area of concentration); and (3) career education instruction (one day per week in which students, often as a group, take part in career education activities such as self-awareness workshops, counseling, explorations in the various disciplines, and in-house sharing of work in the arts through personal, staff, and guest presentations).

Because of lack of interest on the part of the parents of participating students, the series of parent workshops and meetings was not held this year. The Project did provide for individual parent consultations and several open houses, however.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

In order to analyze the student questionnaires, PSE first identified those students who completed questionnaires both at the beginning and at the end of the program. We used only these matched 25 pairs of questionnaires in the analysis. In this way, any differences found within the students' pretest and posttest responses would be due to changes in the career awareness and self-awareness of these students rather than to the fact that we had obtained responses from different people. We feel that these 25 matched pairs represent a large enough sample of the approximately 60 students involved in the program at some time during the year so that we can generalize for the entire group.

After these matched pairs of questionnaires were selected, student responses were tabulated. Questions were grouped into three categories representing information about: (1) self-awareness and self-knowledge; (2) knowledge about work in the arts; (3) career decision making (in which students apply their self-knowledge to future work in the arts). These three groups correspond to the three major student goals set by the Center for 1976-77. Responses to questions about characteristics of students such as grade level, sex, and previous experience with the arts are used to describe the group. Of course, these are not expected to change due to Project efforts, but rather to assist the reader in understanding the group of students.

The questionnaires contained both cognitive (knowledge) and affective (attitudinal) items. The Center staff of working artists scored four of the open-ended cognitive items both at pretest and posttest times; PSE felt that these artists had the expertise needed to judge these four items which pertained to their specific artistic disciplines. PSE provided the scoring guide and scales

for these items. (Note: In most cases, PSE agreed with the ratings of these Center staff artists; occasionally slightly high ratings were to given to posttest responses, but PSE does not feel that these ratings altered the apparent trends in pretest to posttest gains.)

On attitudinal items, students were asked to agree or disagree with 13 statements by responding on the following scale: strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, or strongly disagree. PSE looked at the movement toward the correct end of the scale for each item (whether it be agree or disagree) as well as the movement from agree or disagree to strongly agree or strongly disagree. In some cases, where pretest to posttest trends did not differ and when differences did not seem significant, the data will not be discussed in this report.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Overall, the data show that in both the pretest and posttest administration of the questionnaires, students show fairly favorable attitudes toward themselves, the arts, and the world of work in the arts. Some changes did occur on these attitudinal items and will be discussed in detail in this section of the report. In some cases, pretest attitudes were so positive that they left little room for improvement as a result of participation in the Center's program. These data on attitudinal items look very similar to attitudinal item data from the 1975-76 program evaluation also conducted by PSE.

On the contrary, however, students showed many positive changes in cognitive items which dealt with knowledge about work in the arts (career awareness) and career decision making. In 1975-76, students evidenced relatively low career awareness both at pretest and at posttest time. In 1975-76, PSE felt that students had not gained in career awareness for at least two reasons: (1) although the staff had been well qualified to teach about the arts and serve as models of professionals working in the arts, they had had little previous experience in the area of career education itself; and (2) due to factors which delayed the start of the program, students were involved for only approximately four months--perhaps too brief a period to expect measurable changes in either attitudes or career awareness.

This year, however, the Project has corrected both those problems. First, this is the second year of participation in the Project for several of the key staff artists; PSE is able to see a noticeable change in their understanding of career education and in their interest in providing career instruction for students. In 1975-76, the career education component of the program was a distant

second priority to arts skills training, whereas this year career education has been given a high priority by most staff members who provide career education instruction not only in their skills training but also in the special career education programs each week. The special coordinator of the career education component of the Center's program seems to have done a fine job of organizing and implementing a career education curriculum; she has also worked with the Center staff artists in preparing them to take part actively in the career education component of the program.

Second, the Center was able to start its operation for this 1976-77 year in early October, thus giving students almost a full academic year of participation. By posttest time in May, students had been involved for seven full months; consequently, this year's longer length of "treatment" (participation in the Center's program) was likely to make a bigger pretest to posttest difference in student learning than last year's four-month program.

PSE believes that the positive student testing results are also due to a number of other factors concerning the Center's program and its staff, and these factors will be briefly discussed in the conclusions and recommendations section of this report.

Some important aspects of the findings from the student questionnaires are discussed in greater detail below in four sections: (1) group characteristics; (2) self-awareness and self-knowledge; (3) knowledge about work in the arts; and (4) career decision making.

Group Characteristics

Of the 25 students who had completed both a pretest and a posttest and who were thus chosen as the sample group for analysis, 18 students were female and seven were male. This is perhaps a slightly high representation of females, although the Project has traditionally attracted more females than males. Efforts

were made this year to recruit males for the program (for example, by using males on the Center's staff to give the recruiting talks at local schools), and these efforts were successful to some degree. There are still no males, for instance, involved in the dance segment of the program; further efforts should perhaps be made to seek out interested male students, although these efforts would be quite time consuming.

Of the 25 students in our sample, one was in tenth grade, twelve were in 11th grade, and twelve were in twelfth grade. This sample seems to be a fair representation of students actually involved in the Center's program.

Concerning the five areas of art concentration, four students in our sample were involved in dance, four in music, four in theater, and thirteen in visual arts. No students in our sample took part in the creative writing component of the program since there were only a very few students involved in creative writing at any point during the year. The Project is still trying to determine why students did not enroll in creative writing in 1976-77. PSE believes it may have something to do with the fact that advanced English courses in the traditional high school are more able to handle these talented students than are other arts departments at the high school level. Our sample contained a high proportion of students enrolled in the visual arts component of the program; visual arts, however, did have the greatest number of students involved in it during the year and even had a large enough enrollment to separate students into two ability levels for the visual arts classes.

Students were also asked about their previous experience in the area of concentration they had selected. Most students had understandably been in involved in arts classes in their own high schools (typical art or music classes). In addition, about half of the students had also been involved in extracurricular school activities (such as playing in the band or participating in school plays)

related to the arts and had taken one to four years of lessons (such as dance or music lessons) outside of school. Only four students had taken five or more years of lessons outside of school and only three had been involved in the Center's program in 1975-76. In other words, it seems that these students had been fairly well exposed to the arts through traditional school and out-of-school means, but far fewer had been exposed to non-traditional arts program, such as the Center or community art group experiences.

Finally, students were asked why they decided to audition for and join this program at the Center and what they thought participating students could expect to gain from it. Slightly fewer than half the students noted that they had decided to join the program in order to make a decision about a future career in the arts and in order to pursue their artistic hobbies and interests. Following the decision-making theme, slightly over half of the students both at pretest time and at posttest time (fourteen at pretest time and fifteen at posttest time) felt that students who participate in the Center's program could expect to gain enough knowledge to make a final decision about pursuing a career in the arts. Although the Project does not encourage participating students to make final decisions about their future, it does hope to give them the tools they need to start the decision-making process and to be able to make better decisions following their post-secondary education or future training. A good deal of work has been done with students this year on decision-making and perhaps these efforts are reflected in student responses to these items.

Overall, students had very high expectations of the program when they entered in October, and none of these expectations were lowered by posttest time. Most students at both pretest and posttest time felt that students could expect to gain the ability to evaluate their talents and acquire understanding of the skills and requirements necessary to become a professional artist as a result of participation

in the Center's program. On the other hand, at pretest time half or fewer of the students felt that their expectations for the program included gaining entry-level skills in the arts, acquiring appreciation for the talents of a professional artist, learning criteria with which to judge works of art in their area of concentration, or gaining knowledge of the life-styles of professional artists; in each of these four areas, between five and eleven more students by posttest time felt that these were reasonable expectations for participating students. The students' very favorable attitudes toward the program and indeed their understanding of what students could learn from the program are clearly reflected in their responses to this item.

Thus, our sample of students is representative of both males and females in the program, eleventh and twelfth graders in the program, and the four art disciplines which had the largest enrollment of students during the year. The sample is also fairly homogeneous concerning their previous experience in their area of concentration, their reasons for joining the program, and their favorable attitudes toward the program and what can be learned as a result of participating in it.

Self-Awareness and Self-Knowledge

In order to obtain some background on the students' lives at home and to see whether this would affect students' self-concept, we asked students several questions about their parents. The data show that at both pretest and posttest time the majority of students believe that their parents are fairly knowledgeable about careers in the arts and would be very supportive of them if they decided to pursue such a career. At the same time, approximately half of the students agreed that most parents would understandably rather have their children go into business professions instead of arts professions. These data taken together seem to indicate that students are aware of the instability and stereotypes associated

with the art field and could understand some parents' reluctance about their children entering such a career; on the other hand, students seem to view their parents as fairly knowledgeable about work in the arts and very supportive of them and their possible commitment to such a future career. In other words, students view their parents as perhaps more knowledgeable and understanding than parents in general. If these students' perceptions of their parents' knowledge and attitudes are accurate, this could partially explain parents' seeming disinterest in participating in workshops set up by the Project--no matter how provocative they might be. These parents perhaps believe they are already knowledgeable enough about work in the arts and supportive enough of their children; thus, regularly scheduled open houses and individual consultations may be all the "treatment" that these parents need in order to keep them supportive of and interested in their children's future plans.

Concerning students' awareness of their own interests and abilities in the arts field, we asked students what they expected to be doing in the arts next year and ten years from now. In terms of next year, virtually all students expected to continue to study in their area of concentration; approximately one-third of the students expected to be active in arts-related extracurricular activities. Very few students (four on the pretest and only two on the posttest) expected to obtain an entry-level professional job in the arts; this is probably a realistic assessment of their current professional ability level. The greatest pretest to posttest change (from one-fourth of the students on the pretest to one-half of the students on the posttest) in students' expectations concerned attending performances and art showings for their own enjoyment.

PSE believes that this substantial change is a direct result of students' participation in the Center's program. In fact, we asked students how often they attended such performances or showings dealing with their area of special interest. At pretest time, the median response was once every couple of months; by posttest time, the median response was once a month. Students' attendance at such performances and showings has also increased over 1975-76 participating students. It is possible that staff artists made more attempts to interest students in these performances and showings or took them on more field trips to such events. Many of these staff artists do indeed perform in local and state groups; in fact, in one segment of the career education component of the program, these staff artists discussed themselves and their work with students, and thus may have interested students in arts performances and showings in that way.

It is interesting that, when asked what they expected to be doing in the arts ten years from now, attending performances and showings for their own enjoyment also evidenced the largest pretest to posttest increase in student responses. It is interesting to note that in ten years only one-half of the students expected to be studying in their area of concentration, yet virtually all students expected to have a professional job in the arts. It is somewhat contradictory that virtually all students agreed (and there was a significant pretest to posttest increase in those who strongly agreed) that, as artists, they would expect to continue their education most of their lives. This seeming inconsistency is perhaps best explained by the fact that students may have a professional--but non-performing--job in the arts in ten years. In other words, they may be in the business end of the arts field or the technical end of the arts field, for example; in either case, continuing education or study in their area of concentration would not be so important as it would be for the performing dancer or performing

musician. It is further interesting that very few students (two at pretest time and three at posttest time) commented that they would be pursuing the arts as a hobby for their own enjoyment ten years from now. Two possible explanations for the surprisingly few number of students who chose this response are: (1) these students are not yet able to give up the idea of a professional career in the arts and thus would not consider the arts merely as a hobby for the future; and (2) perhaps too much emphasis has been given to the notion of a career in the arts--performing or not--during the course of the program thus making students feel that pursuing the arts only as a hobby is a "second class" choice to make.

We also asked students a number of questions about themselves--their goals, skills, and talents. When asked to explain the purpose of having personal goals, only seven students were able to give answers rated as good on the pretest; however, at posttest time, 18 students were able to give good answers. (Answers were rated as either poor, fair, or good by PSE staff.) This pretest to posttest change--from approximately one-fourth of the students giving good answers to almost three-fourths giving good answers--is quite substantial and must be directly related to the program's efforts. The concept of personal goals must have been discussed in the career education component of the program (perhaps in the self-awareness workshops); in addition, the staff artists themselves must have provided exemplary role models of working artists who have set and strived for their own personal goals (having interviewed these artists on a number of occasions, PSE believes that their personal goals and their ability to work to accomplish them are clearly evident to those around them).

When asked if they felt they knew the limitations of their skills and talent in their area of concentration in the arts, there seems to be little change in

students' responses from pretest to posttest time. At both the beginning and end of the year, not quite one-half of the students felt that they knew their limitations in their art skills and talents. Of course, these results are quite understandable since these students are relatively new to serious, intensive arts studies and since most still have a good deal of further education and/or training to complete before they can say they have reached their potential. With most students, it would seem premature for staff artists to identify a student's skills and talents limits and impress those limits on the student.

There was a slight decline in the number of students who felt that it was important for an artist to be able to judge his/her own work. It is possible that, in this first year of exposure to successful working artists and other gifted and talented students, some students have experienced difficulty in developing internal standards for their work which seem to match those of their mentors and classmates. Therefore, they are still relying on the judgment of others concerning the value and quality of their work and have not yet come to realize the full importance of setting internal standards and developing self-evaluation skills. More emphasis may want to be given to this topic of self-evaluation in the future; it could easily become a part of the self-awareness workshops and a topic which the staff artists could discuss with their students while they are working in their own disciplines.

Finally, two attitudinal items on sex stereotyping seem to indicate that students are becoming slightly less prejudiced about identifying certain roles in the arts with one sex or the other. More students at posttest time than at pretest time agreed that male ballet dancers are just as strong and athletic as football players and that women should consider becoming producers even though there are few successful women in this field. It is encouraging to see not only

that most students started out with unbiased attitudes about professions in the arts for both men and women but also that even more students at the end of the year were able to share these unbiased viewpoints. Therefore, it seems that these students will not be limited in their own choices of arts careers by traditional sex stereotypes and that their personal views and self-awareness are such that they will have a wide range of opportunities open to them.

In general then, students seem to show some pretest to posttest gains in self-awareness and self-knowledge as a result of participation in the Center's program. These gains are perhaps slightly better than those achieved by students in the 1975-76 program and thus are probably due to the 1976-77 program's career education component with its special self-awareness workshops, use of self-assessment tools, and the exploration of the lives and work of the staff artists.

Knowledge About Work in the Arts

On items designed to measure improvement in this second goal area of the Center's program, students were able to show remarkable pretest to posttest improvements. These gains are particularly significant because students in the 1975-76 program were able to make only very small, insignificant gains in career awareness.

For example, PSE asked students to define what artists mean by the "creative process." At pretest time, only four students were able to give answers which were rated as good, but 17 students were able to give good answers by posttest time. (Students' responses were rated as either poor, fair, or good by the staff artists who had worked with the students during the year.) Even if these student ratings were slightly high because the answers were graded by the students' mentors who wanted students to do well, this could not account for an increase as large as is evident here. In fact, the gain is even more significant when compared

to 1975-76 data which show that, by posttest time then, only four of 22 students were able to give good answers to this question. This dramatic 1976-77 pretest to posttest gain is most likely related to the section of the career education component of the program which dealt with explorations into the various arts disciplines (each discipline guided an exploration into their field to discover processes and vocabulary as well as similarities and differences among the art forms). This unit was introduced by the film Why Man Creates which emphasized process and creative problem solving. As staff artists and the Project Director often indicated to PSE during the year, the Center was much more concerned with students' becoming involved with the process of creating art rather than the end product created; thus, an understanding of the creative process would have been a major objective of the staff--one which was obviously met based on these test results.

In order to probe into students' knowledge of various occupations available to them in the art field, PSE asked students to list as many jobs as they could in each area of concentration offered by the program. The pretest to posttest changes in the number of jobs students were able to list in each of the five disciplines were quite substantial. For example, in the field of visual arts, students as a group were able to list approximately 70 jobs at pretest time and 150 jobs at posttest time; in the field of music, students were able to list approximately 60 jobs at pretest time and 150 at posttest time. In addition, a greater number of students were able to list a greater number of jobs in any one area by posttest time. For example, for theater, only five students were able to list five or more jobs at pretest time while 20 were able to list five or more jobs by posttest time; in creative writing, only one students was able to list five or more jobs at pretest time while 16 were

able to list five or more jobs by posttest time. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that, although 1976-77 students were approximately equal with 1975-76 students at pretest time, this year's students were able to show much greater growth in this area during the year. These gains may be directly due to the Center's special emphasis this year on bringing in a variety of guest speakers in each discipline to talk to students about their lives and their work. During our February site visit, PSE was able to attend that week's career education program in which panels of guest artists from each discipline were invited to speak to students. In most cases, PSE felt that these artists were honest, open, and informative and that students were interested, curious, and questioning. It is important to understand that these panelists included many people who are interested in and work in the arts but who do not perform (for example, a music publisher and a booking agent).

Following the theme of a variety of arts-related careers, one of the attitudinal items which showed the greatest pretest to posttest change was the following: "It's difficult to be a satisfied artist unless you have made it to the top (New York or Hollywood)." At pretest time, only 12 students (about one-half of the students) strongly disagreed with this statement; by posttest time, 18 students (approximately three-fourths of the students) strongly disagreed with this item. In other words, during the year, students grew to realize that being a satisfied artist is not measured by the external glamour of a job as perceived by the public. PSE believes that the students' close relationships with their mentors on the staff had a great deal to do with this realization.

As any staff artist is the first to tell you, the concept of financial reward and "earning a living" is one of the most central topics of discussion for artists. PSE asked students to list five ways artists support their

work (e.g., taking other part-time jobs, teaching, federal and state grants, etc.). At pretest time, only three students were able to list three or more ways artists support their work (no student was able to list five ways). By posttest time, 20 students were able to list three or more ways artists support their work and 10 were able to list five ways. This pretest to posttest change is quite substantial and certainly indicates that this topic was well covered by all of the staff artists during the year. This knowledge is, of course, vital for students to have if they are seriously considering a career in the arts. PSE also asked students whether they agreed or disagreed that the risk of unemployment for people in the arts is really no higher than for people in any other career area. At pretest time, only two students strongly disagreed with this statement while, at posttest time, six students strongly disagreed with this statement. The majority of other students at least disagreed with this statement. It is apparent that these students are aware of the financial problems and concerns shared by working artists and are now well equipped to take this into consideration when preparing to make a career decision.

Finally, PSE turned toward the personal side of work in the arts and asked students to list five values which an artist in their area of concentration should possess (e.g., honesty, creativity, etc.). At pretest time, only two students were able to list four or more values which an artist should possess while, at posttest time, 16 students were able to list four or more values. The concept of values seems to be one that is sometimes difficult to explain. Many students tended to list personality traits rather than values, but those which seemed to be the right idea were given credit by PSE. More specific values clarification exercises probably could be introduced into the career education component of the program next year and, given the sensitivity of this

type of student, would probably meet with great success.

In summary, as mentioned previously, students were able to show significant pretest to posttest gains in this goal area of career awareness--gains which comparable students in 1975-76 were not able to show. PSE correlates this year's substantial improvement with the introduction of the career education component into the program.

Career Decision Making

This third goal area is, in effect, a product of the first two. In other words, career decision making is the relationship of a student's self-awareness and self-knowledge to what he or she knows about work in the arts; without awareness of himself or herself and without awareness of the world of work in the arts, it is impossible for a student to make informed and realistic career decisions.

First, PSE asked students what kinds of jobs and/or education they would need to enable them to reach to goals they had identified for themselves (what they expected to be doing in the arts 10 years from now) and, in addition, asked them to list five skills they would need to acquire to enable them to reach their goals. (Staff artists graded both of these items.) At pretest time, only four students were able to give answers rated as good as to the jobs and/or education they would need to reach their goals; by posttest time, 19 students were able to give good answers to this question. Even accounting for slightly high ratings by the staff artists, this is a remarkable pretest to posttest change. It is obvious that this material was well covered during the year. For example, PSE would point to a section of the career education program which dealt with counseling of the senior students at the Center by their mentors regarding career decision making and preparation for application to institutions for further study

and training. While on-site, PSE staff also heard Center staff artists discussing a number of different students and the choices and directions for future education and training which they had helped them make. This service is desperately needed by these talented students since traditional high school guidance counselors are certainly not so well informed about arts professions and the quality of a variety of art programs as these staff artists are.

At pretest time, only three students were able to list four or more skills which they would need to acquire to enable them to reach their goals; by posttest time, 19 students were able to list four or more of these skills. This is further evidence that the Center's program made students aware of the skills they would need in order to make a realistic career decision (in the career education component of the program) whether or not the Center's program could impart these skills to students in this one year (in the skills training component of the program). In order to make a decision about a career in the arts, PSE felt that students would need to know a lot of different kinds of information--things about themselves or their area of interest in the arts--and the sources of that information (e.g., the availability of certain jobs in the arts would be important information for them to have and other artists, statistical reports, or trade journals might be the sources of that information.). (Again, the staff artists graded these student reponses on a scale of one (one correct response) to 10 (10 correct responses)--five pieces of information and five matching sources of that information.) At pretest time, only three students were able to give six or more correct responses; by posttest time, 22 students were able to give six or more correct responses (with nine students giving all correct responses). This pretest to posttest change is considerable and certainly reflective of information which students gained as part of the career education component of the program. It is particularly

interesting that students last year at posttest time were able to give an average of six responses while students this year at posttest time were able to give an average of eight correct responses. Obviously, a combination of the introduction of the career education component into the program and staff artists who were more experienced with career education and/or better oriented to career education this year seems to account for the difference.

When deciding on a career in the arts, it is usally important to know how to choose an instructor or teacher for further lessons and training. When asked to list three criteria for choosing an instructor for further lessons, only five students could do so at pretest time. By posttest time, 19 students were able to list three appropriate criteria. Again, a great pretest to posttest improvement is evident and, in part, attributable to the increased awareness on the part of the staff artist concerning the importance of providing career education information and decision-making skills for these students.

Finally, PSE asked students to name three people working in the arts with whom they would like to discuss their career plans or interests. To answer this question, students would have to draw on their knowledge of themselves and the kind of artists whom they feel comfortable with and can gain information from as well as their knowledge of a variety of contacts of people working in the arts in their area of interest. At pretest time, only three students could name three such contacts; by posttest time, 20 students could name three contacts. In addition, at pretest time nine students (approximately one-third of the students) could not name any contacts; by posttest time, every student could name at least one such contact. Again, it is interesting to note that 1975-76 students at posttest time could barely name one contact on the average, while 1976-77 students at posttest time could name almost three contacts on the average. PSE can only attribute this gain over the two years

to the increased emphasis on the career education component of the program and to this year's special emphasis on providing students with a variety of guest speakers and contacts in the working world of the arts.

In conclusion, both pretest to posttest gains in 1976-77 as well as substantial gains of the 1976-77 students over the 1975-76 students are clearly evident. The changes are dramatic and promising and certainly show that the the Project worked hard to improve the program being offered to students, particulary in terms of the career education component.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As detailed in the previous section of this report, student pretest to posttest gains on the revised PSE-developed student questionnaire were quite substantial and significant. With the addition of the 1976-77 career education component of the Center's program, students were able to show quite remarkable growth in their knowledge about the world of work and in their career decision-making skills particularly. As mentioned previously, 1976-77 students scored considerably better than 1975-76 students; this is most likely due to the addition of the career education component of the program as well as to increased awareness and interest on the part of the staff artists in providing career education instruction for students.

After two site visits during this year, PSE staff feels that we are beginning to know the staff artists and the Project Director fairly well. PSE is continually impressed with the quality of these staff artists and the genuine concern that they show for students involved in the program. The Project Director has worked hard over the past two years to build a compatible, concerned staff, and she seems to have done a fine job. The addition of one staff person to organize and implement the career education component of the program in 1976-77 has been most welcome; her efforts are apparent from the students' posttest results.

PSE staff believes that we have never seen a Project Director who has done any better at managing a project than this one. She takes a personal interest in each and every student involved in the program and knows the background and special problems of each one; in return, it is apparent that they admire and respect her completely. We firmly believe that this Project Director has taken an interesting idea concerning career education in the arts and turned it into a workable, well designed model of career education as it can and should be.

On our second site visit, PSE staff had the opportunity to talk to a variety of students individually in order to determine their feelings about the program. It was obvious that the students' attitudes toward this experience were overwhelmingly positive. Without exception, each student felt that he or she could not possibly have gotten such an education in their regular school classes. They seemed to thrive on the attention and concern of the staff artists as well as of the Project Director.

PSE staff was also privileged to attend one of the open houses which the staff artists and students put on for interested visitors and parents. Students from each area of concentration performed, displayed their works, and/or talked informally to the audience. The professionalism and talent which were displayed that evening were remarkable. One student performed a song which she composed (words and music) which literally brought the audience to its feet. That anecdote, however, is typical of the very special and unique results of the Center's program.

PSE finds it diffiuclt to make major recommendations to the Project for next year. Minor recommendations have been made in the body of this report. It seems, however, that the two most pressing needs of the Project are: (1) rethinking parental involvement in the Project; and (2) continuing to develop, revise, and refine the career education component of the program.

As we have mentioned already, it seems that the full-scale program of parent workshops which the Project had planned to conduct this spring may not be the most feasible way to involve parents. We urge the Project to conduct a needs assessment or market survey of parents' interests and concerns regarding the Project for 1977-78. This needs assessment or market survey could be conducted in September, 1977, in order to determine the degree to which parents would like to become involved in the Project and the degree to which they can afford to become involved (given the constraints of their job and family responsibilities). It

may be that regularly scheduled open houses and individual consultations will be enough to meet their needs as well as their childrens' in terms of parental support and understanding. Perhaps discipline-oriented parent meetings could be conducted in order to give parents some contact with other parents of students who are gifted and talented in the arts. For instance, all parents of students involved in the theater area of concentration could plan one or two group meetings to discuss mutual concerns they have about their children and to learn about the special problems and rewards of a career in the theater; these group meetings could be conducted by the staff artist in charge of the theater component along with the staff artist in charge of the career education component of the program and the Project Director herself. These smaller discipline-oriented group meetings may be more easy to schedule and handle than full-scale parent workshops would be. Again, a needs assessment or market survey of parents in the early fall would give the Project the best data available on which to make a decision about the future of parent involvement in the Project.

Second, PSE would encourage the Project Director and her very able staff artists to continue to think about the career education component of the program. They should discuss what went well and what did not go well in 1976-77 so that adjustments can be made for next year. PSE understands that the Project staff have already given some thought to resequencing the segments of the career education program, and PSE would encourage them to continue to view the career education program critically and work on refining it so that it best meets the students' needs. The Project staff should also consider asking the students directly to comment on the career education weekly programs and to point out those segments of the programs which were most and least useful to them as they think about their future in the arts. Overall, PSE believes that the Project has provided good career education instruction for students this year--both in quality and in quantity--and that career education has taken its place as a priority for the Project staff both in 1976-77

and in the future.

In conclusion, PSE would congratulate the Project staff on its fine efforts on behalf of career education in 1976-77. It is a pleasure to see a career education project which improved so significantly from its first to its second year. We can only believe that it will continue to improve and provide an excellent career education opportunity for gifted and talented students in the arts in Rhode Island.